

# Royal call for private sector to boost tourism



HRH Prince Salman with the private sector sponsors of the Celebrate Bahrain events

**TDT | Manama**

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, underscored the need to further strengthen Bahrain’s tourism sector, expand private sector participation and advance high-quality initiatives that showcase the Kingdom’s rich cultural heritage.

He stressed that these efforts

are key to reinforcing the Kingdom’s standing as an attractive regional and international tourist destination.

HRH Prince Salman noted that such initiatives reflect a broader national vision aimed at sustainable growth and long-term economic diversification.

**Meeting**

During a meeting at Riffa Palace with private sector sponsors

of the Celebrate Bahrain events, HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister emphasised the importance of partnership between the public and private sectors in driving national development.

He highlighted that the Kingdom’s progress is guided by the comprehensive development vision led by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

“Public-private sector partnerships play a pivotal role in

supporting and advancing the Kingdom’s comprehensive economic development,” His Royal Highness said, pointing to collaboration as a cornerstone of Bahrain’s continued growth.

**Example**

He described the Celebrate Bahrain events as a clear example of integrated national efforts, demonstrating what can be achieved through Team Bahrain’s collective approach.

HRH Prince Salman praised the organisers and sponsors for their contributions to the National Day celebrations, saying their support “underscores the strength of partnership and national responsibility” and reflects the private sector’s active role in promoting Bahrain’s diverse tourism offerings.

Platinum sponsors of the Celebrate Bahrain events were the National Bank of Bahrain, Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait, and GFH Financial Group. Gold sponsors included Aluminium Bahrain (Alba), the National Bank of Kuwait and Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (GPIC), while silver sponsors were STC, Infracorp and Ebrahim K. Kanoo B.S.C. Bronze sponsors included Beyon, AlSalam Bank, Khaleeji Bank, Urbaser, and Yousif Khalil Almoayyed and Sons Co.

## HH Shaikh Isa commends HM King’s designation of 2026 as ‘Year of Isa Al Kabeer’

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His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Minister of the Prime Minister’s Court, yesterday commended His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa’s Royal Order designating 2026 as the “Year of Isa Al Kabeer”.

The designation celebrates the founder of the modern state and the leader of Bahrain’s modern institutional history, His Highness Isa Al Kabeer, Ruler of Bahrain and its Dependencies.

HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman noted that this designation commemorates His Highness Isa Al Kabeer’s enduring legacy in ensuring stability and establish-

ing a wide range of legal and civil institutions across the Kingdom of Bahrain.

**Commitment**

He affirmed that this Royal Order reflects HM the King’s commitment to preserving the Kingdom’s history and immortalising the legacy of the figures who contributed to Bahrain’s development by consolidating its foundations and strengthening its stability over the years.

HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman further noted that His Highness Isa Al Kabeer left behind a rich legacy and an extensive record of achievements that strengthened the Kingdom of Bahrain’s standing politically, economically, and

HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa culturally.

HH the Minister of the Prime Minister’s Court also commended the diverse economic, cultural, and public service projects taking place in Muharra, from where His Highness Isa Al Kabeer ruled during his reign.

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**“His Highness Isa Al Kabeer left behind a rich legacy and an extensive record of achievements that strengthened the Kingdom of Bahrain’s standing politically, economically, and culturally.”**

– HH SHAIKH ISA BIN SALMAN BIN HAMAD AL KHALIFA, MINISTER OF THE PRIME MINISTER’S COURT

His Highness highlighted initiatives that enhance awareness of the Kingdom’s history, including His Majesty the King’s Royal

Order to preserve the historical and cultural identity of Bahrain’s buildings and cities, as well as to revive Isa Al Kabeer Palace and develop Muharra.

He highlighted the ongoing follow-up and directives of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, which contribute to preserving the historical and cultural identity of Muharra.

HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman concluded by expressing his pride and appreciation for this Royal Order, wishing Bahrain continued security, stability, and prosperity under the leadership of His Majesty the King.

# Financial safeguards

Shura Council passes anti-money laundering decree-law ahead of FATF review

**Mohammed Darwish**  
**TDT | Manama**

The Shura Council passed Decree-Law No. 36 of 2025 yesterday, approving changes to Bahrain’s anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing rules ahead of a Financial Action Task Force (FATF) assessment due in March 2026.

Members discussed the report of the Shura Council’s Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security Committee on the decree-law, which amends parts of Decree-Law No. 4 of 2001 on the prohibition of and combating money laundering and terrorist financing.

Dr Bassam Al Binmohammed, the committee’s rapporteur, said the amendments were driven by evolving methods used in money laundering, terrorist financing and the financing of the proliferation of weapons, adding that they “embody core international obligations that the Kingdom will be assessed against in the next periodic review”.



H.E. Nawaf Al Maawda

The committee report said the decree-law updates key definitions in the 2001 law, widens the forms of the money laundering offence, and tightens confiscation rules to cover proceeds and the means used, while protecting the rights of good-faith third parties.

It also replaces the schedule attached to the law to cover newly emerging activities and sectors seen as higher-risk for money laundering and terrorist financing, including virtual asset service providers.

A key change is expanded powers for the Financial Intelligence National Centre (FINC) as the implementing body, through



Dr Bassam Al Binmohammed

a new Article 4 bis.

The committee said this broadens FINC’s scope in financial enquiries, analysis and coordination, including the power to request a pause or delay of suspicious transactions for a limited period while checks are completed, including in response to requests from overseas



Dr Ali Al Rumaihi

counterparts.

**Crime**

Dr Ali Al Rumaihi, a Shura Council member and head of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security Committee, told the sitting that, “The term “money laundering” has become a media simplification;



Dalal Al Zayed

it is a crime punishable by law”, describing how its tools have changed over time and how countries now fight it through law and capable enforcement bodies.

Dalal Al Zayed, head of the Shura Council’s Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee, pointed to changes in how criminal gains are framed in the text, saying, “Replacing “returns of crime” with “proceeds derived from crime” is a broader and more comprehensive definition’, capturing direct and indirect funds that can pass through property and investment.

Justice Minister, His Excel-

lency Nawaf Al Maawda, told the council the decree-law “is important for the Kingdom of Bahrain”, linking it to Bahrain’s push to sharpen oversight tools in line with FATF standards.

**Mechanisms**

He said firms that provide artificial intelligence services but, within their work, manage financial portfolios, digital assets or funds through those portfolios “will be subject to accountability mechanisms”, adding that oversight follows the activity rather than simply using AI.

On cash dealings, H.E. Al Maawda cited an existing decision tied to the gold trade that bars cash payments above BD3,000, and said monitoring systems track compliance.

He added that the Central Bank of Bahrain will issue instructions spelling out the duties of banks and financial firms in applying FATF standards, and that FINC’s powers have been expanded, with the centre expected to take on a larger role in monitoring transfers.